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Programme 6
General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services

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* A/55/50.

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Overall orientation

6.1 The overall objectives of this programme are (a) to facilitate the deliberations of the General Assembly and its General and Main Committees and its various subsidiary organs, the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary and ad hoc bodies, as well as special conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations dealing with disarmament, international security and economic, social and related matters, through the provision of authoritative advice and secretariat services, and (b) to ensure the provision of high-quality conference services to all intergovernmental and expert bodies meeting at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV). The basic mandates for the provision of secretariat and conference services are contained in the rules of procedure of the main organs of the United Nations. Additional mandates for conference services are found in resolutions adopted regularly by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, particularly those on the pattern and calendar of conferences and on the control and limitation of documentation. Overall intergovernmental direction concerning the organization and servicing of meetings is given by the General Assembly on the advice of the Committee on Conferences, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, which established the terms of reference of the Committee. The Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services is responsible for the implementation of this programme and for the achievement of its objectives.

6.2 The Department will provide authoritative advice and technical support, as well as efficient and effective conference services, including meetings planning and coordination, editing, translation, interpretation, meeting records, publishing and distribution of documentation. Further steps will be taken to strengthen the efficiency of the unified conference-servicing facility at Vienna as a United Nations common service.

Subprogramme 1
General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs

Objectives

6.3 The major objective of this subprogramme is to ensure the orderly and procedurally correct conduct of the meetings and follow-up work of the General Assembly, its General, First, Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth), Second and Third Committees and the subsidiary and ad hoc bodies under the aegis of the Assembly, such as the Disarmament Commission and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean; the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary and ad hoc bodies and the Trusteeship Council; the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; and the special conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations in the fields of international security, disarmament, economic, social and related areas, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure and established practices of the organs of the United Nations. Another objective of the subprogramme is to facilitate the deliberations of the subsidiary organs and various open-ended working groups established by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, namely, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion and Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, in their consideration of major issues that will have a significant impact on the work of the Organization.

Strategy

6.4 Within the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division is responsible for the implementation of this subprogramme. The Division will assist the Presidents and Bureaux of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the Trusteeship Council and other intergovernmental

bodies, and the representatives of Member States in all matters relating to the work of those bodies, with particular emphasis on the effective scheduling and procedurally correct conduct of meetings as well as consultations on their work, and will provide those bodies with technical secretariat services. The Division will also prepare and use analytical studies on the rules and procedures of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to prepare for various scenarios so that the conduct of meetings will be consistent with the rules and practices of the bodies and to assist Member States in the development of appropriate proposals for review by the bodies concerned.

6.5 The Division will continue to provide technical secretariat services for the meetings of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and its subsidiary bodies, as well as organizational and technical secretariat servicing support to decolonization-related activities, such as visiting missions and the mandated activities of the Special Committee relating to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

6.6 The Division will also continue its work on research and preparation of analytical studies on the application and interpretation of the provisions of the relevant articles of the Charter of the United Nations related to the activities of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, their subsidiary and ad hoc bodies and their rules of procedure, for inclusion in the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. The Division will also coordinate the production of the volume of the *Repertory* devoted to the General Assembly and endeavour to update the *Repertory* and ensure its regular publication, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 51/209 and 52/161.

6.7 The Division will prepare the necessary parliamentary documentation and coordinate the submission of correct and duly authorized reports and communications for processing as official documents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies or the Trusteeship Council, as well as their timely issuance in accordance with the practice, programme of work and schedule of these bodies, in order to facilitate the organization and conduct of their meetings. In addition, the Division will be responsible for the analysis of resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and for conducting consultations and coordinating the assignment of responsibility for the implementation of such resolutions and decisions and the respective follow-up to ensure timely action by relevant bodies.

Expected accomplishment

6.8 Improved conduct of meetings of United Nations organs through timely and qualitative organizational and secretarial support and authoritative advice on meetings procedure would be an expected accomplishment of the subprogramme.

Indicator of achievement

6.9 An indicator of achievement would be the percentage of scheduled meetings conducted in a timely, orderly and procedurally correct manner.

Subprogramme 2
Planning, development and coordination of conference services

Objectives

6.10 The main objectives of this subprogramme are to rationalize the allocation of conference-servicing resources and so maximize the Department's capacity utilization, and to ensure that the conference services provided to the United Nations organs are adequate to meet the evolving requirements of the Organization.

Strategy

6.11 Within the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the substantive responsibility for the subprogramme is assigned to the Central Planning and Coordination Service and the respective services of the Department's operational units at Geneva and Vienna, as appropriate. The Service will focus on: (a) analysis of available conference resources for mandated meetings through regular consultations with United Nations bodies at Headquarters and other duty stations with a view to assessing their needs; (b) effective planning of the annual calendar of United Nations conferences and meetings, and allocation of conference-servicing resources on the basis of workload statistics, performance indicators and cost information;

(c) upgrading of the technological capacity in conference services in line with new developments in technology; and (d) monitoring compliance by author departments and offices of the Secretariat with regulations governing the timely and orderly preparation of parliamentary documentation. The Committee on Conferences will be provided with substantive and technical support for effective delivery of its mandate.

Expected accomplishment

6.12 Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources would be achieved through an allocation more closely adjusted to the actual requirements of the meetings mandated by United Nations legislative bodies.

Indicator of achievement

6.13 The degree of satisfaction expressed by Member States regarding the level and quality of the conference services they are provided with would be an indicator of achievement.

Subprogramme 3
Translation and editorial services

Objective

6.14 The objective of this subprogramme is the efficient and timely issuance of documentation and other written materials reflecting high-quality editing and translation.

Strategy

6.15 Within the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the substantive responsibility for this subprogramme rests with the Translation and Editorial Division at Headquarters and with the related editorial and translation services of the Department's operational units at Geneva and Vienna, as appropriate. The Division and the services will utilize an appropriate mix of permanent, temporary and contractual staff and adequate technological resources to ensure that documentation and other materials in official languages of the United Nations are issued in a timely fashion, in strict compliance with the regulations and rules governing language arrangements for the various bodies and organs of the United Nations. Self-revision will be used within reasonable limits while safeguarding standards of quality. Reliance on contractual translation will continue with a broadening of the range of material processed in this manner and a more consistent use of quality control procedures. Efforts will continue to widen the access to electronic reference and terminology databases by editors and translators, and to expand the use of computer-assisted translation to facilitate the work and enhance the accuracy and consistency of translated documents. Workload sharing among conference centres will be further expanded, thereby contributing to the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the documentation production.

Expected accomplishment

6.16 An accomplishment would be a progressive enhancement of the quality of edited and translated documents combined with their timely release for text-processing, reproduction and distribution.

Indicator of achievement

6.17 The degree of satisfaction expressed by Member States regarding the quality of the editing/translation of the documents they receive would be an indicator of achievement.

Subprogramme 4
Interpretation, meeting and publishing services

Objectives

6.18 The objectives of this subprogramme are to provide efficient and accurate interpretation and verbatim reporting services, and to ensure the timely production and distribution of documents and publications in the official languages of the Organization.

Strategy

6.19 Within the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the substantive responsibility for this subprogramme rests with the Interpretation, Meetings and Publishing Division at Headquarters and with the related interpretation and publishing services of the Department's operational units at Geneva and Vienna, as appropriate. Remote interpretation, contingent on the results of pilot-

projects, will be further developed as a complement to on-site services, subject to the provisions of relevant General Assembly resolutions. Off-site verbatim reporting will be expanded. In the publishing area, the application of advanced electronic information management and communications technology will continue, in order to address the demand for both printed and electronic products and to make the production operation speedier and more efficient. The availability of parliamentary documentation and other publications will be enhanced through widespread access to electronic documents stored on optical disk, an expansion of the capacity for printing on demand, and the development of computer-assisted storage and retrieval systems in the distribution area. External printing will be further reduced through the use of desktop publishing in all official languages and the continued expansion of the technical capabilities of the in-house reproduction plant. The possibility of converting the in-house printing capacity into a United Nations common service will be further explored, in consultation with United Nations Funds and Programmes at Headquarters and with specialized agencies of the United Nations system at Geneva.

Expected accomplishments

6.20 Expected accomplishments by the end of the plan period would be an enhancement of the high-quality interpretation provided to scheduled meetings, and the production and issuance of parliamentary documentation consistently in accordance with current rules.

Indicators of achievement

6.21 Indicators of achievement would be the following:

(a) The degree of satisfaction expressed by Member States with respect to interpretation and meeting services provided to them;

(b) The degree of satisfaction expressed by Member States regarding the timely issuance and distribution of parliamentary documentation.

Legislative mandates

Subprogramme 1
General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs

Relevant articles of the Charter of the United Nations

General Assembly resolutions

S-10/2	Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly
52/12	Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform
52/220	Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Subprogramme 2
Planning, development and coordination of conference services

Subprogramme 3
Translation and editorial services

Subprogramme 4
Interpretation, meeting and publishing services

General Assembly resolutions

49/237	Questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995
52/161	Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization
54/64	Multilingualism
54/248	Pattern of conferences